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NEW CHAIRMAN—Supervisor Lloyd Cullen of Santa Rosa was yesterday elected new chairman of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

Rancher, 73, Is Beaten on Head by Thief

Young Sonoma State Home Fugitive Hunted After Assault, Car Theft

His skull fractured by hammer blows, Herman Schieck, 73-year-old Sonoma mountain rancher was near death early today at Victory Hospital in Napa as statewide search was pressed for a youthful escapee from the Sonoma State Home at Eldridge, believed responsible for the brutal attack upon the rancher and theft of his automobile.

The youth, LeRoy (Red) Burch, psychopathic delinquent committed to the institution from Stockton, vanished from the hospital grounds about 1:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

Schieck, who had been repairing a line fence on his property on Sonoma Mountain road, west of Glen Ellen, had parked his Chevrolet sedan alongside the road. The elderly rancher was found crawling in a neighboring pasture, some 200 yards from the point where he was slugged on the head, about 2:45 o'clock yesterday afternoon, officers said. He was unable to speak.

Belief that the young Eldridge fugitive had wrested Schieck's hammer from him, and then had beaten the aged rancher into insensibility was expressed. Efforts to locate the blunt weapon used in the beating had been unavailing early today, but a posse of sheriff's deputies planned to return to the area this morning to renew search for the instrument.

Ranchers in the neighborhood told officers they saw a stranger speed down the Bennett Valley road toward Santa Rosa in Schieck's car, but did not pay particular attention to this fact until after the report had spread that te rancher had been beaten to the point of death.

Neighbors took the badly injured rancher to the James Norrbom garage in Glen Ellen, and with Norrbom's assistance he was removed to the office of Dr. Carol B. Andrews in Sonoma. Dr. Andrews ordered an ambulance and Schieck was speeded to the Victory Hospital, where his condition was described as extremely grave.

Dr. Andrews said the patient was irrational and had not fully regained consciousness shortly before midnight. He said efforts to question the victim concerning the attack had been unsuccessful.

Sheriff Harry L. Patteson, Criminal Deputies William E. Cook Jr., Andy Johansen, Ted Ries and James Manning were speeding the search for Burch. Officers pointed out that he could have easily walked from the state home grounds to the Schieck ranch by skirting traveled thoroughfares.

Teletype descriptions of the fu-

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